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AUTHOR	Levin, John S.
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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the discussion of community colleges as baccalaureate-degree granting institutions. The discussion is based on research projects undertaken in both the U.S. and Canada that investigate the institutionalization of degree programs at community colleges. Colleges in British Columbia and Alberta are baccalaureate as well as sub-baccalaureate institutions, resulting in a muddying of institutional identity. The colleges claimed to uphold community college principles, such as open access and responsiveness to the community, yet their allegiance was to higher-level programming. As a result of these changes, the conceptual framework and the institutional identity have been altered. Now, the community college baccalaureate can be seen as increasing access for populations that are underserved by baccalaureate-granting institutions. In the U.S., state legislation authorizes community colleges to grant B.A. degrees in four states: Idaho, Nevada, Utah, and Florida. These states require that the colleges continue to offer programs synonymous with the community college mission. This paper argues that the baccalaureate degree-granting community college possesses a new identity that signifies an end of its former identity as a two-year institution. Contains 66 references. (NB)

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Institutional identity: The community college as a baccalaureate degree granting institution
(draft)

John S. Levin
W. Dallas Herring Distinguished Professor

ED 474 578

Department of Adult and Community College Education
College of Education
300 Poe Hall
Campus Box 7801
North Carolina State University
Raleigh, NC 27695-7801
john_levin@ncsu.edu

Paper for symposium (Gumport, P., Levin, J., & Bastedo, M., Neo-institutional perspectives on public higher education: research, theory, and practice) at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Sacramento, California, November 21, 2002

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Institutional identity: The community college as a baccalaureate degree granting institution

Explanations of organizational change have a relatively short history in the field of higher education but occupy a central place in scholarship. Drawing upon organizational theory, higher education scholars for at least the decades of the 1970s and 1980s applied rational or contingency theories to colleges and universities: that pattern continued in the 1990s (Cameron & Tschirhart, 1992; Leslie & Rhoades, 1995; Peterson, 1998; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997). Other theoretical perspectives, such as institutional theory and symbolic action theory, while less prominent, have provided a counterpoint to resource or politically-based explanations. Institutional theories and particularly the "new institutionalism" (Powell, 1991) emphasize institutional environments and contexts, favoring local and institutional actors over economic markets and competition as explanatory of organizational action and alteration. Institutional theories provide a compelling explanation for pervasive similarities among organizations, and suggest that the isomorphic process increases the stability of organizations over time and enhance organizational survival (Di Maggio & Powell, 1991). An effort to apply new or neo-institutionalism to community colleges (Brint & Karabel, 1989) provided for an engaging narrative, but not all scholars found either the argument or the evidence convincing (Adelman, 1994; Frye, 1994). Brint and Karabel (1989) as well as other neo-institutionalists imply that institutional issues, such as status, drive organizational actions. However, institutional theory alone, and particularly this kind of institutionalism, does not account for the significant changes undergone by community colleges over the past decade. Organizational change in community colleges has been promulgated by not only by institutional environmental forces but also by global forces. Thus, using both neo-institutional theory and more rational theories

associated with adaptation (Cameron, 1984) we may find more even ground to explain organizational action in community colleges.

Although Kraatz and Zajec (1996) offer a compelling argument that neo-institutionalism fails to account for divergent and illegitimate behaviors because these behaviors are not consistent with mimetic isomorphism, they neglect to consider coercive or normative isomorphism whereby behaviors are similar for other than goals of status. The interpretation that neo-institutional theory identifies state officials and professionals as directing the social change process (Brint & Karabel, 1991; Davies & Guppy, 1997) is partly accurate for community colleges – state officials certainly are influential in normative and coercive isomorphism but not mimetic isomorphism and professionals are only marginally influential in directing change, limited to normative isomorphism.

Neo-institutionalism alone is not sufficient to explain organizational change in the community college, particularly the establishment of baccalaureate degree programming and degree granting. Other forces, aside from conformity to institutional environments and their standards, shape organizational action (Dacin, Goodstein, & Scott, 2002). In the 1990s particularly, the globalization process is one of these forces. Taken in conjunction with neo-institutionalism, globalization theory provides explanations for organizational change. Globalization theory moderates neo-institutionalism's implications that homogeneity is the consequence of organizational change within institutional fields. Globalization theory, on the contrary, argues that the globalization process produces divergence and diversity (Guillén, 2001) as local sites respond to and incorporate elements of global patterns of behavior differently.

Although scholars acknowledge that globalization leads to increasing interdependence in cultural, economic, and political activities across borders as well as awareness of the reduction of temporal and spatial boundaries globally (Appadurai, 1990; Guillén, 2001; Robertson, 1992; Waters, 1996), a substantial portion of scholarship on globalization, especially that directed to the study of

higher education (Currie & Newson, 1998; Marginson & Considine, 2000; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997), emphasizes economic globalization to the exclusion of other domains. Thus, it is noted that one of the outcomes of economic global competition is that markets not citizens are the focus of higher education institutions. This includes programming as well as research activities (Levin, 2001a; Marginson & Considine, 2001).

Since the late 1980s, practitioners and government agencies deliberated over the introduction of baccalaureate degree programming at community colleges. In the U.S., four states—Florida, Idaho, Nevada, and Utah—clearly and unambiguously permit community colleges to offer baccalaureate programs. In Canada, baccalaureate degree programming and degree granting are legislatively permissible in British Columbia, Alberta, and Ontario. A U.S. based association, the Community College Baccalaureate Association organized in the 1990s as a corporation to "communicate... the advantages of offering certain baccalaureate degrees through community colleges" (Community College Baccalaureate Association, 2001). The institutionalizing of baccalaureate degree programs at community colleges reflects not only the expanding mission of the community college but also the altering identity of the institution. Indeed, community college behaviors in embracing and adapting to changing environments re-shape the institution in order both to respond to external pressures and to take advantage of opportunities where the institution can expand and fulfill its mission (Levin, 2001a; Levin, 1998). These action, however, are attenuated by institutional matters—such as institutional history and culture as well as institutional norms for community colleges.

Community colleges are not well-understood by higher education scholars who continue to view the community college as a facet of the educational pipeline to increased social and economic mobility (Brint & Karabel, 1989; Clark, 1980; Dougherty, 1994; Rhoads & Valadez, 1996). The identity of the community college according to numerous scholars continues to be associated

with university transfer (see Cohen & Brawer, 1996; Townsend & Twombly, 2000). In this sense, the community college is conceived of as an institutions that is part of the field of higher education as distinct from occupying its own separate field. With the institutionalization of the baccalaureate degree, however, that identity is altering.

Paradoxically, a community college continues to be a community college even if a four-year program is offered and a baccalaureate degree is bestowed upon the institution's students. Certainly, this contradicts both formal and informal designations of the community college as a two-year institution. Thus, a theoretical understanding of the community college as an educational institution situated between high school and university, as a second chance institution, as a preparatory school, as a feeder institution, or as a sub-baccalaureate institution is at least partly misguided.

The community college is a multi-faceted institution, an organization "affected not only by present influences and pressures but also by past circumstances" (Scott & Christensen, 1995, p. 310). An organization's identity—that is, "its central, enduring, and distinctive character" (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991, p. 520)—both limits and directs its actions. Thus, the expansion of the scope of actions or a change to patterns of actions reflects a change in organizational identity.

Neo-institutionalism rejects the market as the main source of power for institutional action and change; instead, the primary institutional agents have become the state and the professions (Scott, 1995). For the baccalaureate degree at the community college, although the professions may take a major role in programmatic development, the state has primacy over the establishment of degree programs and degree-granting status. The formal institution—represented by the governing board and the administration (legally the arm of the chief executive officer)—is an extension of the state (Carnoy, 1984; Levin, 2001a). It is the state through coercion—by tying funding to programs for

example – that is the premier institutional agent for change in the community college.

Research

This discussion is based upon research projects undertaken in both Canada and the U.S. that investigate the institutionalization of baccalaureate degree programs at community colleges. These projects address the legal foundations of baccalaureate degree programming and degree granting, the actions of community college practitioners and government officials to extend community college programming to the baccalaureate level, and the outcomes of baccalaureate programs at community colleges. These seek to determine the influences of the globalization process upon the institutionalization of the baccalaureate degree.

Qualitative research methods, including interviews, document analysis, and observations, were employed in the examination of systems and colleges in three Canadian provinces and all U. S. state systems (Burgess, 1984; Levin, 2001b; Mason, 1996; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Scott, 1990). Analytically, I identify the rationales for baccalaureate degree granting and programming, the extent to which there is an alteration of the mission of the community college, and the implications of this mission change, including new identity formation.

The Canadian context

The Canadian research focuses upon baccalaureate programs at community colleges during the period of 1988 to 2001. Three jurisdictions – Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario – were sites where this programming was underway. By 1989, the government of British Columbia had formulated policy to enable selected community colleges to offer baccalaureate degree programs; by the mid-1990s, the government of Alberta followed; and, by 2000 the government of Ontario's policy permitted Ontario's non-baccalaureate sector to offer baccalaureate degree programs (Levin 2001b). The changes brought about

by the introduction of baccalaureate degree programming in the provinces of British Columbia and Alberta indicate that the purposes of these institutions altered. Organizational members viewed their institutions as serving a more economic function—particularly associated with job and career preparation—and as an institution providing four-year programming, that is, an undergraduate institution.

In both British Columbia and Alberta where baccalaureate degree programming had operated over a period of at least five years, the colleges became baccalaureate as well as sub-baccalaureate institutions. The change in institutional purpose resulted in both conflicting and ambiguous cultures. While conflict and ambiguity (Martin & Meyerson, 1988) may have been present previously, due to labor and management relations and distinct professional interests among diverse groups of faculty and administrators, the presence of baccalaureate degree programming brought professional interests into sharp focus, both highlighting frictions and muddying institutional identity (Levin, 2001b). On the one hand, the colleges claimed to uphold former community college principles such as a comprehensive curriculum, open access, and responsiveness to the community (Dennison & Levin, 1988). On the other, the colleges' allegiance was to higher level programming, as can be noted in their resource allocations and curricular focus, which favored baccalaureate programs. While some lower level programming was eliminated or starved in both Alberta and British Columbia, colleges with baccalaureate programming expanded (Levin 2001a). As the higher credential was pursued, higher levels of finances, student abilities, and institutional status were also objects of pursuit. After a decade of baccalaureate degree-granting status, five community colleges in British Columbia with baccalaureate degree-granting status separated themselves from the other ten non-baccalaureate degree-granting public colleges in the province: they lobbied government for separate legislation to put them on par with the provincial universities by recognizing them as universities. Such

legislative recognition is intended to give these colleges not only university status but also university forms of funding, such as block grants. In Alberta, there was a serious effort to establish another provincial university, with one of the public colleges likely to be transformed from college to university. In Ontario, where baccalaureate degree programming received government approval in 2000, the re-shaping of the post secondary sector was underway with the addition of a baccalaureate degree-granting institute and its placement on a college campus[1] (Levin, 2001b).

Such changes suggest that public colleges, or community colleges, formerly classified as sub-baccalaureate institutions that now contain baccalaureate programming and the legislated authority to grant the higher credential – the baccalaureate degree – can be differentiated as institutions from their counterparts that do not grant the baccalaureate degree. What has altered, then, is not only the conceptual framework or world view that "shape[s] and guide[s] members' values, perceptions, attitudes, and behavior…[as well as] the organization's purpose, policy, priorities, procedures, and structures"(Levy & Merry, 1986, p. 10) but also institutional identity, as understood from both within and without. Both organizational participants, including board members, administrators, faculty, staff, and students, and organizational stakeholders, including the local communities, the public and the private sectors, and the state, as well as the wider national and international communities, can be expected to view and respond to the baccalaureate degree-granting community college as a different institution from that of the past.

Rural Valley College in the province of British Columbia offers an example of a community college that is undergoing identity alteration with the establishment of baccalaureate programs. Interviews conducted in 1998 as a follow-up to those conducted in 1997 indicate organizational changes that flow from the baccalaureate degree programming and a status change to

baccalaureate degree granting reflected in the name change of the institution from Rural Valley College to Rural Valley University College (see Table 1).

Table 1: Rural Valley College

Interviewee's position	Outcomes of baccalaureate degree programming
Program Head, Criminology / Criminal Justice	There is a problem of equilibrium between the community college and the university college. The university college status has changed external relationships for example the university is no longer dominant. The university degree drives the institution. There is a disjuncture between old faculty and new faculty. There are fast changes in the college as a result of degree programs. Now we need to talk about a faculty association in addition to a union.
VP of the union.	We have a new identity. There is a difference from being a unionized community college to being a unionized university college. We offer university courses with a community college approach. There is tension between teaching and scholarship. Students are coming here for a university degree not for a college diploma and then transferring to a university.
Economics Faculty, past union president.	Deans are now seen as managers and faculty are seen as experts. Some programs in the vocational and adult basic education areas are on a declining slide.
Professor, Philosophy	As a result of new university college status departments are more independent. Departments have a greater role in governance. There is more administration at the department level and the role of department heads has expanded. The mission is driven by the university model and new faculty. We focus on individual students, on their needs and interests. We question whether we have gone into too many directions. Some areas such as English language training and trades training have become marginalized.
Lab Instructor	Resistance to university college status from old guard. Students now focus on job training not general interest.

Chemistry Professor	General interest courses diminished. College has chosen to jump on the university band-wagon.
Department Head, Sociology	Trend toward interdisciplinary.
Instructor of History	College has wrestled with the idea of university college and has a personality and identity crises. Problems with the management structure especially with senior managers who are not academic leaders.
Instructor, ABE Upgrading Department	Potential for access programs with emphasis on degree programs; increase feeling of vulnerability in times of scarcity
Dean of Finance and Administration	College is meeting demand in university programming. We see the need for both a community college and a university college in one institution. We have gained new students and new faculty and support staff. We have developed a new culture. Many people have questioned old and traditional patterns.
ESL Head	There is animosity against university college programs. ESL programs cannot compete within college or in marketplace.
Head, Health Sciences	University colleges in British Columbia have national attention—appeared in *McLean's* magazine. There are divisions within the college; tensions between the university college and local needs. We are not as responsive to local community needs. In Nursing, the baccalaureate does not mean much more money. There is also a negative view of the university college. Those who are not part of the university college feel less of themselves—creation of sub-cultures.
President	There is growing centralization; structural change underway Main emphasis is still on community. Department chairs are unclear of their roles. We are moving toward a university model.
Head, Philosophy and Political Science	We are still a community college--will never be a university. We have a liberal arts emphasis--changed from the past. There is increased respect for those who want to do research; there is money for scholarly activity and a section off to do scholarly work. We no longer have an intimate relationship with the universities because of our status as a UC.
English Head	We have shifted from a community college to degree

	granting--this still affects the old guard, who have old expectations. We now have external evaluators. More and more demand is faced by faculty. There are factions of new and old. We have an evolving culture. The mangers are not technically equipped. The government is resistant to liberal arts for its own sake.
English Faculty	We have external teams from universities doing program reviews. In pushing for more scholarship we are up against the administrative structure. There is greater pressure from new faculty in degree programs to adopt a newer model like a university environment--they want research time. We are no longer tied to our closest university. We are moving out of an older model, and this is supported by external reviewers. Yet the community college model drives us in labor relations--for example there is tension in hiring--do we hire the locals or the experts from elsewhere? If they do not have Phds we have problems.

There are obvious attitudinal and operational tensions between the community college as previously conceived at Rural Valley College and the newly established university college, legally named and authorized to offer baccalaureate degrees.

> There is a problem of equilibrium between the community college and the university college. (Program Head, Criminology and Criminal Justice)
>
> There is a difference from being a unionized community college to being a unionized university college. (Vice President of the faculty and staff union.)
>
> College has wrestled with the idea of 'university college' and has a personality and identity crises. (Instructor of History)
>
> Many people have questioned old and traditional patterns. (Dean of Finance and Administration)

> There is animosity against university college programs. (ESL Department Head)
>
> There are divisions within the college; tensions between the university college and local needs. (Health Sciences Department Head)

Indeed, there is evidence of the creation of sub-cultures as an outgrowth of these tensions.

> We have shifted from a community college to degree granting--this still affects the old guard, who have old expectations... There are factions of new and old. (English Department Head)
>
> Those who are not part of the university college feel less of themselves—creation of sub-cultures. (Health Sciences Department Head)

These outcomes reflect the impact of institutional environments upon Rural Valley College. Both the institutions of the community college and the university figure prominently in the behaviors of Rural Valley College. With nearly a decade of experience as a baccalaureate degree granting institution, Rural Valley College provides a different perspective on the effects of institutional environment than U.S. community colleges newly embarking on the baccalaureate degree programming process. This alteration in the U.S. is much more recent than that in British Columbia or Alberta, Canada. The U.S. colleges reflect the initial development of baccalaureate degree program and the influences that shape these actions.

For Rural Valley College, a new identity has emerged out of the provincial government's policy, funding, and eventually legislation for the establishment of baccalaureate degree programming and degree granting status for selected "two-year" or public colleges in the province.

> We have a new identity. (Vice President of the faculty and staff union.)
>
> We are moving toward a university model. (College President)

> We are moving out of an older model, and this is supported by external [program and accrediting] reviewers.

The U. S. context

In the U.S. context, I examine the legal and formal foundations of baccalaureate degree institutionalization. State legislation and bills leading to legislation as well as state agency and institutional policies are primary sources for this investigation. These sources are examined through the lenses of both globalization theory (for example, Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, & Perraton, 1999; Robertson, 1992; Waters, 1995) and neo-institutionalism, specifically the community college access mission, to generate data. Document analysis addresses all states and particularly those states—Idaho, Florida, Nevada, and Utah—where the baccalaureate degree in 2002 was permissible as a component of community college programming: that is, community colleges are authorized to grant their own baccalaureate degrees. This action is distinct from the actions of community colleges and four-year colleges or universities of offering a baccalaureate degree program at a community college site but the conferring of the degree remains within the authority of a four-year college or university. Such actions are permissible in a number of states including Arizona, Arkansas, California, and Oregon. These joint actions may be referred to as "concurrent-use campuses" (Windham, Perkins, & Rogers, 2001) and include the practice of baccalaureate degree granting institutions offering courses and programs of upper division collegiate credit on community college sites (Martorana, 1994). Community colleges in these states, however, do not constitute self-standing baccalaureate degree-granting institutions.

Documents are analyzed to identify the motivations and impetus for baccalaureate degree programming at community colleges. The analytical framework incorporated the categories of markets and access—economic opportunities, pressures and competition are characteristics of markets and

changing demographics and community pressures for advanced education are features of access. On the one hand, if rationales in legislative authorization for the community college baccalaureate are couched in language that refers to workforce needs, then part of the motivation can be viewed as a response to markets. On the other hand, if rationales refer to increasing access to populations that are underserved by baccalaureate degree granting institutions, then part of the motivation can be viewed as furthering access. Document analysis also leads to a comparison of legislative and policy language on baccalaureate degree granting at community colleges to the language on missions of community colleges. This indicates if and the extent to which community college missions are shifting or expanding by the introduction of the baccalaureate degree to these institutions.

Table 2: Florida

Florida	Title XVI Education; Chapter 240 Postsecondary Education 240.301 Community colleges; definition, mission, and responsibilities. (2) …the community colleges shall provide high-quality, affordable education and training opportunities…to all while combining high standards with an open-door admission policy… (3) The primary mission and responsibility of public community colleges is responding to community needs for postsecondary academic education and degree career education. Title XVI Education; Chapter 240 Postsecondary Education 240.3836 Site-determined baccalaureate degree access It is the intent of the Legislature to further expand access to baccalaureate degree programs through the use of community colleges. (2) A community college may be authorized by the Florida Board of Education to offer a limited number of baccalaureate degrees designed to meet local workforce needs… (3) A community college may not terminate its associate in arts or associate in science degree programs… Sources: Florida state website Online Sunshine: http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?Mode=View%20Statutes&Submenu=1&Tab=statutes

The state of Florida is one of four U.S. jurisdictions where state legislation authorizes community colleges to offer baccalaureate degree programs (see Table 2); yet similar to the other three jurisdictions – Idaho, Nevada, and Utah – the institution must continue to offer programs synonymous with a community college and be deemed a community college as well as a baccalaureate degree granting institution (see Table 3). This suggests that the institutional characteristics of the community college are maintained and amalgamated with some characteristics of a university. Beyond programming at the third and fourth year levels, however, these characteristics are not specified. In Utah policy, the philosophy and mission of the community college are noted specifically whereas references to the university are silent on distinctive institutional characteristics.

Table 3: Utah

Utah System of Higher Education System and Institutional Mission Statements and Roles R311-4 4.1. …It is the intent of the Board to emphasize differing roles and missions of the nine USHE institutions, which provides greater choices for students… 4.2….The Board of Regents, in consultation with institutional Boards of Trustees, will continually refine the missions and roles of each public college and university to respond to changing needs of students, businesses, and communities. R311-5 5.5. Utah Valley State College – Utah Valley State College is a state college comprised of two interdependent divisions. The lower division embraces and preserves the philosophy and mission of a comprehensive community college, while the upper division consists of programs leading to baccalaureate degrees in areas of high community demand and student interest... 5.6. Dixie State College of Utah – Dixie State College of Utah is a state college comprised of two interdependent divisions. The lower division embraces and preserves the philosophy and mission of a comprehensive community college, while the upper division consists of programs leading to baccalaureate degrees in areas of high community demand and student interest… Sources: http://www.utahsbr.edu/policy/r310.htm http://www.utahsbr.edu/policy/r311.htm

St. Petersburg College in Florida provides a salient example of the complexity and problematic nature of institutional identity when a community college adds a baccalaureate degree-granting function. For St. Petersburg, the legislative mandate is dualistic—that is, St. Petersburg is both a community college and a university (see Table 4). Yet, the legislation also stipulates that academic policies for upper-division programs, that is baccalaureate programs, must be consistent with university policies in the state. Furthermore, faculty are governed by a similar model: upper-division faculty are eligible for continuing contracts while community college faculty are not. Financing the institution also reflects this differentiation: state-funded as both a community college and a baccalaureate degree granting institution.

Table 4: Florida, SB 1162 2nd Engrossed (http://www.leg.state.fl.us--5/25/01)

Section 35 240.3836 Site determined baccalaureate degree access
Section 40 St. Petersburg College -

(1) Legislative Intent.—The legislature intends to create an innovative means to increase access to baccalaureate degree level education in populous counties that are underserved by public baccalaureate degree granting institutions. This education is intended to address the state's workforce needs, especially the need for teachers, nurses, and business managers in agencies and firms that require expertise in technology.

(2) St. Petersburg College; Mission; Policies. —St. Petersburg Junior College is redesignated as St. Petersburg College. The college shall immediately seek accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools as a baccalaureate degree granting college.

(a) The primary mission of St. Petersburg College is to provide high-quality undergraduate education at an affordable price for students and the state. The purpose is to promote economic development by preparing people for occupations that require a bachelor's degree and are in demand by existing or emerging public and private employers in this state.

(a) St. Petersburg College shall maintain the mission and policies of a Florida community college, including the open-door admissions policy and the authority to offer all programs consistent with a public community college's authority.

(4) Degrees--

(a)...St. Petersburg College may offer selected baccalaureate degrees...in the following fields:

1. Bachelor of Science in Nursing....
2. Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education.

3. Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education.
4. Bachelor or Applied Science in fields selected by the Board of Trustees of St. Petersburg College. The Board of Trustees shall base their selection on an analysis of workforce needs and opportunities...

(b) Master's degree level programs and doctoral programs may be provided by agreement with a college or university participating in the University Center of St. Petersburg College...

(5) Boards.--...

(e)...4 years after the college receives accreditation to offer baccalaureate degrees, the Board of Trustees of St. Petersburg College may determine additional programs to be offered, with the approval of the coordinating board...

(6) Employees. –

(a) Employment at St. Petersburg College is governed by the same laws that govern community colleges, except that upper-division faculty are eligible for continuing contracts upon completion of the fifth year of teaching...

(8) State Funding. –

(a) The Legislature intends to fund St. Petersburg College as a community college for its workforce development education programs and for its lower-division level college credit courses and programs.

(b) The Legislature intends to fund St. Petersburg College as a baccalaureate degree level institution for its upper-division level courses and programs.

The findings from the example of St. Petersburg College indicate that the concepts of markets and access pertain to the establishment of baccalaureate degree granting at community colleges. Economic pressures from employers are cited as motivation for legislation. Furthermore, the reference to "an affordable price" suggests that access is a financial issue. However, the State of Florida Statutes of 2001, Title XVI (State of Florida, 2001b), underscores the significance of access generally:

> It is the intent of the Legislature to further expand access to baccalaureate degree programs through the use of community colleges.

In the U. S. context, the baccalaureate degree at community colleges serves several purposes including expanding access to postsecondary education and responding to economic pressures from both state government and local

business and industry. The establishment of baccalaureate degree programs at community colleges conforms to the community college missions of both access and institutional responsiveness to community demands and to local markets.

Institutional identity

Notwithstanding this continuity with the past identity of community colleges, involving access and responsiveness, baccalaureate degree programming and baccalaureate degree-granting status for community colleges have the potential to alter organizational culture and institutional identity. For example, university values such as merit, as opposed to equity, are in some distinction to community college values. The institution's relationship with its environment has begun to alter in as much as the community college's position with its environment, such as universities and the marketplace, is changing as well. The reliance upon universities for four-year programs lessens and the student market for baccalaureate degrees expands the community college's constituents as well as its influencers.

Both institutional theory and globalization theory frame the understanding of organizational actions and change *vis-à-vis* the baccalaureate degree at the community college. Institutional theory accounts for the establishment of baccalaureate degree programs based upon access, one of the foundational tenets or principles of the community college in both the U. S. and Canada (Cohen & Brawer, 1996; Levin & Dennison, 1989). From an institutional perspective, moreover, the baccalaureate degree granting community college in the Canadian province of British Columbia, as reflected in Rural Valley College, is a new institution, with or without a new name. New regulations, norms, and cognitive systems (Scott, 1995) are a consequence of baccalaureate programming and degree legal status. For example, in faculty hiring practices the doctorate not the master's degree is the preferred, and in some cases the required, credential for instruction at the third and fourth year level – unlike accepted practice and

traditions in the community college (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). In both the U.S. and Canada, consistent with institutional theory, the state operates as an agent of institutional change.

Globalization theory, in some distinction to neo-institutionalism, provides another perspective of actions related to baccalaureate degree programming at the community college. Clearly, these baccalaureate degree granting colleges are responsive to external demands for higher levels of education and training, particularly the demands of the economic marketplace. Workforce training demands, which are not the vocational demands of the 1970s and 1980s (Brint & Karabel, 1989), require programming for professional careers, such as Nursing and Teaching, areas where baccalaureate degree programming at community colleges are the norm. This programming shifts the mission of the community college to attention to elites – to a professional class in need of baccalaureate degrees. Additionally, as reflected in the baccalaureate degree colleges of British Columbia, the institution itself engages in economic marketplace competition in employment of professionals, including a more highly educated workforce and changed institutional expectations for work. These expectations for faculty include a research function in addition to an instructional one, a practice most evident in the jurisdiction of British Columbia (Levin, 2001c).

The baccalaureate degree granting community college possesses an identity that is no longer simply a sub-baccalaureate institution, no longer a postsecondary institution that serves marginalized and underserved groups as its primary client or customer, and potentially no longer of lesser status than universities or state colleges because of its less credentialed faculty or its transfer function. Baccalaureate degree granting status for community colleges signifies an end to an identity as a two-year institution (Levin, 2001b; Walker, 2001).

Both institutional forces as well as global forces are reflected in this development. Global forces influence marketplace orientation and higher level programming to meet the needs of the 'new economy' – workplace skills that

prepare business and industry for favorable global positions. Institutional forces include coercive isomorphism as the state determined that these institutions will not only offer baccalaureate degrees but also both maintain characteristics of a community college and model universities as baccalaureate degree granting institutions.

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[1] In Canada, two-year or community colleges are referred to as "colleges" or "public colleges." There is no tradition in Canada of four-year colleges, public or private (Dennison & Gallagher, 1986; Levin 2001a).

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